

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY APPLE AMENDMENT CLEARS ANOTHER HURDLE

PROVIDES \$150 MILLION MORE FOR APPLE GROWERS

WASHINGTON - An amendment authored by U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey to provide \$150 million in aid to apple growers was ensured of inclusion in the Agriculture Appropriations bill today. The funds are intended to compensate the growers for devastating market losses during the 2000 crop year.

"The US apple industry is suffering serious financial hardship for the fifth straight year," said Hinchey. "Though the causes can be attributed to a variety of factors, the essence of the problem is low prices, compounded by bad weather and plant diseases. The apple growers of America are teetering on the edge and are in great danger of going out of business if they don't get some help."

U.S. apple growers have sustained losses of \$1.5 billion over the past five years, including an estimated \$500 million during the past year. A glut of illegally dumped Chinese apple juice concentrate on the market was a major factor in those losses.

Last year Hinchey, who is a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, wrote the amendment that secured \$100 million for market loss in the fiscal year 2001 Agriculture spending bill. That marked the first time the federal government provided compensation for apple growers. Growers began receiving checks distributing the FY '01 funds in the past two weeks.

Earlier this month, Hinchey offered his amendment as the Appropriations Committee was considering the agriculture spending bill for fiscal year 2002. The committee approved the amendment by a vote of 34-24 before sending the bill on to the full House. Today the House passed the rule for debate on the Agriculture Appropriations bill, leaving the Hinchey amendment intact. This ensures that the amendment will be included in the final bill when it is voted on by the full House. Passage of the bill is expected when the House returns from the Independence Day recess.

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